Guided Reading Outline

My Brother Sam is Dead

By James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier

**Big goals/everyday goals**

* Reading a difficult text
* Talking to learn together
* Writing to learn independently
* Understanding literary elements
* Citing the text

**Literary element focus by chapter**

1: characterization/interactions

2: setting/what’s important to characters?

3: characterization/interactions

4: foreshadowing/hints along the way

5: narrative voice/how we tell a story

6: conflict/conflicts intersect

7: setting/shaped by the people in a place

8: foreshadowing/paying attention to character’s fears

9: characterization/difficult circumstances and character traits

10: narrative voice/details, what they are paying attention to

11: conflict/intersections

12: foreshadowing/paying attention to characters’ fears

13: characterization/motivation

14: characterization/difficult circumstances and character traits

epilogue: ?

**Previewing**

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| * Watch clip from *The Patriot*, look at maps in front of book, look at pictures of Brown Bess, etc… * Background on the war. “Who’s fighting?” paste-in * Establish purpose for reading: thinking about literary elements and literary devices |

**Chapter One**

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| **Focus** | Characterization |
| **Teaching point** | Authors help us get to know a character by showing us how he or she interacts with other characters. |
| **Guidance for reading** | The book opens with Sam returning from college. What can we learn about the Meeker family in this early introduction? In particular, what can we infer about Sam and Father? |
| **Discussion questions** | * What is Sam talking about when he mentions his “telling points”? * How old are Sam and Tim? What does that tells us about childhood/adulthood in this place and time? * What kinds of conflicts are we already seeing in this first chapter? * Why is Father crying at the end of this chapter? |

**Chapter Two**

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| **Focus** | Setting |
| **Teaching point** | Authors tell us about the setting—the time and the place—by showing us what is important to characters, what they really care about. |
| **Guidance for reading** | In the next chapter, we will learn about two things that are very important to the Meeker family in different ways. The first is their religion. The second is Father’s gun, the Brown Bess. As you read, think about how these two things—church and guns—matter to the Meekers. What does that tell us about their setting they live in? |
| **Discussion questions** | * Tim describes a link between religion and what side of the fighting a family or town are on. What is that link? Why does it exist? * What do we learn about Tom Warrups in this chapter? * When Tim leaves Sam at the end, why is he crying? |

**Chapter Three**

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| --- | --- |
| **Focus** | Characterization |
| **Teaching point** | Authors help us get to know a character by showing us how he or she interacts with other characters. |
| **Guidance for reading** | We’ve gotten to know Betsy Read, Tim’s neighbor and Sam’s girlfriend. She appears a lot in the next chapter. What can we learn about Betsy and her role in the conflicts happening around her? |
| **Discussion questions** | * Tim is surprised that life isn’t more altered by the war. Why? * How and why does Betsy help Sam? * How and why does Betsy help Tim? * Who’s side is Betsy on? Why? |

**Chapter Four**

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| **Focus** | Foreshadowing |
| **Teaching point** | Authors include interesting details or surprising information to hint at what is to come. Smart readers use foreshadowing to make predictions as they read. |
| **Guidance for reading** | In the very beginning of this chapter, Tim knows he is going to see Sam soon. He says he feels “sparkly,” “sort of scared and happy both at the same time.” Tim is right to feel scared—by the end of the chapter, scary things have happened to the Meeker family. What other information in this chapter might give us hints or suggestions as to what’s to come for Sam, Father, and Tim? |
| **Discussion questions** | * Why are the soldiers threatening Father? What do they want? * “The War had finally come to Redding, and it was terrible.” *(use as example of backwards foreshadowing…)* * How has Tim and Sam’s relationship changed in this chapter? |

**Chapter Five**

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| **Focus** | Narrative voice |
| **Teaching point** | Authors have to decide *who* will tell a story and *how* they will tell it. Narrative voice can give us insights into a character’s development. |
| **Guidance for reading** | This story is told from Tim Meeker’s point of view. We get to know Tim through his actions and his thinking. We also read the ways he describes the people, places, things, and actions happening around him. As the war continues, Tim’s relationship to his family and to the war changes. What can we learn about Tim’s development as a character through the way he tells the story of the next chapter? |
| **Discussion questions** | * Tim says that Father has a scar from the fight with the Rebels over the gun. What other “scars” does the Meeker family have? * Does Tom Warrups take a side? * What about Mr. Heron? * What is Tim thinking about at the end of this chapter? |

**Chapter Six**

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| **Focus** | Conflict |
| **Teaching point** | Sometimes conflicts intersect—affect each other. For example, a man versus community conflict can create affect a man versus man conflict. |
| **Guidance for reading** | This story takes place during one huge conflict—the war between the colonists and the British. But that conflicts leads to lots of other conflicts, like neighbors spying on neighbors, fathers fighting with sons, and brothers fighting. In the next chapter, pay attention to the new conflicts Tim is finding himself in—for example, with Father and Betsy. How do these relate to the war? |
| **Discussion questions** | * Who does Tim lie to or mislead? Why? * Why is Betsy so upset? * Why did Mr. Heron send Tim with that letter? |

**Chapter Seven**

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| --- | --- |
| **Focus** | Setting |
| **Teaching point** | A setting is shaped by nature (Are there mountains? Is it hot?) and by people (Is it crowded? What kind of work do people do?). |
| **Guidance for reading** | We’ve already seen that during the war, a single house could be divided—like the Meeker’s house. In this next chapter, we will see how people in different parts of the colonies are reacting very differently to the war. |
| **Discussion questions** | * Why are Mother and Father fighting? * Who are the cow-boys? What side are they on? * Who comes to rescue Tim and Father? Why? |

**Chapter Eight**

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| **Focus** | Foreshadowing |
| **Teaching point** | When we pay attention to the concerns and fears of characters, we can make stronger predictions. |
| **Guidance for reading** | In this chapter, Father and Tim have to make some difficult decisions about how they will get home. There are few safe options during wartime, and during winter. As you read, pay attention to the concerns voiced by Father and Tim. How can we use their worries to strengthen our predictions? |
| **Discussion questions** | * What do we learn at the cousins’ house? * What does Tim think about Verplancks Point? * What’s worrisome about the Ridgebury Road? |

**Chapter Nine**

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| **Focus** | Characterization |
| **Teaching point** | Authors help us understand characters by showing us how they react to difficult circumstances. |
| **Guidance for reading** | In the next chapter, Tim faces a very difficult problem. He has to solve it all by himself. He shows us some new character traits—like cunning and bravery. Read on to see how Tim has grown. |
| **Discussion questions** | * What is Tim and Father’s plan? * Tim asks himself what Sam would do, and what Father would do in his shoes. Whose example does he decide to follow? * How does Tim trick the cow-boys? |

**Chapter Ten**

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| --- | --- |
| **Focus** | Narrative voice |
| **Teaching point** | The narrative chooses what details to include, and which to leave out. These decisions contribute to a book’s narrative voice—what matters to the narrator? |
| **Guidance for reading** | In the next chapter, the war comes back to Redding. Tim is feeling more grown up, but he is unprepared for some of the things he says. As you read, pay attention to what Tim is noticing about the war. What is frightening, or even horrifying? |
| **Discussion questions** | * Tim realizes he is acting more like a grown up. What does that mean to him? * Who is fighting on the Rebel side? Why? * By the end, Tim says he doesn’t feel like being a Tory anymore. Why? |

**Chapter Eleven**

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| **Focus** | Conflict |
| **Teaching point** | Sometimes conflicts intersect—affect each other. For example, a man versus community conflict can create affect a man versus man conflict. |
| **Guidance for reading** | In this chapter, Tim and Mother are reunited with Sam. But it’s not all happy. Some new conflicts come up between Sam and his family. As you read, think about these new tensions and what might be causing them. |
| **Discussion questions** | * Mother wants to pray—why? * How does Tim realize Sam might be in town? * How have the members of the Meeker family changed? * At the end of the chapter, are they happy with one another? Why or why not? |

**Chapter Twelve**

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| --- | --- |
| **Focus** | Foreshadowing |
| **Teaching point** | When we pay attention to the concerns and fears of characters, we can make stronger predictions. |
| **Guidance for reading** | In this next chapter, the authors again use foreshadowing. If we pay attention, we can use the information they offer us to make strong predictions throughout the chapter as we read. Pay attention to what is worrying Sam. What does he want Tim to do? Based on that information, what could happen next? |
| **Discussion questions** | * What has happened to father? * How has Betsy’s attitude changed? * Why is Sam so concerned about the cattle? * What happens at the end of the chapter? |

**Chapter Thirteen**

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| **Focus** | Characterization |
| **Teaching point** | Authors tell us about characters—and groups of characters—by letting us see what motivates their actions. |
| **Guidance for reading** | In the next chapter, Sam is in a great deal of danger. This is partly because everyone’s motivations are different. Pay close attention to what different characters, and groups of characters, want. |
| **Discussion questions** | * What do the Meekers want? Soldiers? Generals? * Is it just? |

**Chapter Fourteen**

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| --- | --- |
| **Focus** | Characterization |
| **Teaching point** | Authors help us understand characters by showing us how they react to difficult circumstances. |
| **Guidance for reading** | Tim faces another very difficult situation—the planned execution of Sam. How does Tim react? What does that show us about his growth? What matters most to Tim in this chapter? |
| **Discussion questions** | * Who has power? How/why? |

**Epilogue**

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| **Focus** |  |
| **Teaching point** |  |
| **Guidance for reading** |  |
| **Discussion questions** |  |